

HOW BEAUTIFUL UPON THE MOUNTAINS

Dirt floors, dirt roofs and mud packed between the logs were the order of the day.

When the crops were planted and the log huts prepared, the men left the valley and went back to Provo where happy families greeted them with shouts of "How's the weather?" and "When are we going?"

With wives, children, cows, pigs, chickens and all their earthly possessions packed, the original company started out and were joined by others who were cheered by the reports of a good summer and plenty of farming land and irrigation water. Some of the additional families who came were Thomas H. Giles, John Giles, Hiram Oaks and George Carlile.

During that first summer, some 1,000 bushels of grain were raised in the valley. Though some of the wheat crop was injured by early frost, it could still be made into flour and the settlers rejoiced for the blessings of the harvest. Because the nearest gristmill was in Provo and a four-days' journey away, many of the people ground flour in small hand mills or boiled the wheat and ate it whole with milk.

With the crops in and summer on the wane, dread winter again loomed up before the people. Farming efforts had been to raise wheat and other crops to sustain human life, and so before winter came it was necessary to cut meadow hay and swamp grass for cattle wherever it could be found. All of it had to be cut by hand with a scythe, which proved to be the hardest work of the summer.

Many of the men who had come to the valley during the summer and raised their crops decided that they would return to Provo for the winter rather than provide hay for their cattle and be shut out from the rest of the world for the long winter months.

However, 18 families had cast their lot with Provo Valley and through the winter they stayed. These families, according to the journal of John Crook, were Thomas Rasband, John Crook, Charles N. Carroll, John Jordan, Alexander Sessions, Bradford Sessions, Hiram Oaks, John Lee, Richard Jones, James Davis, William Davidson, James Laird, John Sessions, Elisha Thomas, James Carlile and George Carlile. Jane Clotworthy and Elizabeth Carlile were both widows. Charles C. Thomas, unmarried, lived with his brother Elisha. No record is made of the exact number of women and children.

The first birth among the settlers in the valley occurred in November. The child, a daughter of William Davidson and his wife, Ellen, was named Timpanogos, the Indian name for the valley and the prominent mountain that lay at the west.

For those who remained, the first winter in the valley was a long and dreary one. The snow fell early and was several feet deep. For nearly four months they were without communication from the rest of the world.

At Christmas time, however, a group of young people from Provo braved the weather and came through the canyon by sleigh and spent the holiday season with the families in the valley. They soon left and no one else came into the valley until the snows melted.

... AND THERE WAS LIFE IN THE VALLEY

Their being shut out from the rest of the world did not mean that the settlers spent the winter days and nights with long faces and twiddling thumbs. Quite the opposite. Meeting in the various log homes, they held Church meetings each Sabbath day and during the week gathered for singing, dancing and dramatics.

As the Spring of 1860 neared they hopefully looked for signs that winter was leaving and warm weather was on its way. By the end of March when the snow was still as deep as ever and no signs of Spring were evident, some began to get discouraged. It was finally determined that all would meet at the home of Thomas Rasband where a meeting would be held and the help of the Lord sought.

Those present reported that during the meeting they prayed sincerely and earnestly that the Lord would cause the snow to melt and Spring to come so that their famished oxen and cows might get grass to eat and that they could plant their crops and be in touch again with their friends in the lower valleys.

Before the meeting was dismissed there was water dripping from the eaves of the house and Spring was born in the valley.

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